

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LAGOS 14165 01 OF 02 081151Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13 HA-05 ACDA-12
/088 W

-----097732 081157Z /21/53

O 071455Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5275
INFO USMISSION USUN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LAGOS 14165

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, WA, NI
SUBJECT: NAIMBIA: CONTACT GROUP MEETS WITH OBASANJO

1. SUMMARY: IN TALKS AT DODAN BARRACKS TODAY (DECEMBER 7),
GENERAL OBASANJO URGED THE CONTACT GROUP NOT TO GIVE UP
ITS EFFORTS TO PUSH SOUTH AFRICA AND SWAPO TO A NEGOTIATED
SETTLEMENT OF THE NAMIBIAN PROBLEM. HE CAUTIONED US NOT
TO GO PUBLIC WITH OUT PROPOSAL WITHOUT FURTHER EFFORT TO
GET THE TWO SIDES TO MOVE CLOSER TO AN AGREEMENT. THE FMG
BELIEVES THAT SWAPO REPRESENTS A MAJORITY, THOUGH NOT ALL,
OF THE NAMIBIAN PEOPLE AND WILL BE GUIDED BY SWAPO'S
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LAGOS 14165 01 OF 02 081151Z

POSITION REGARDING THE SETTLEMENT. HOWEVER, AT THE SAME
TIME, THE NIGERIANS WILL NOT HESITATE TO FORM THEIR OWN
JUDGEMENTS AND GIVE ADVICE TO SWAPO. FMG WILL BE IN CONTACT
WITH SWAPO IN NEAR FUTURE. END SUMMARY.

2. THE CONTACT GROUP, WITH THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR REPRESENTING
THE FIVE LOCAL AMBASSADORS MET WITH OBASANJO, COMMISSIONER FOR

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS JOE GARBA, AND AMBASSADOR SANU, DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DEPARTMENT. SPEAKING FOR THE GROUP, MCHENRY MADE A PRESENTATION BASED ON THE TALKING POINTS WE HAVE USED IN THE FRONT LINE CAPITALS. HE ALSO, IN VERY BROAD TERMS, INDICATED THE POSITIONS TAKEN BY SWAPO AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT.

3. OBASANJO SAID THAT OUR REPORT INDICATED SOME PROGRESS, BUT AT THE SAME TIME AREAS WHERE SERIOUS DISAGREEMENT STILL EXISTS. HE THEN ASKED FOUR QUESTIONS : (A) REGARDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ADMINISTRATOR GENERAL AND THE UN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE, WHO WOULD HAVE FINAL AUTHORITY? (B) WHAT ABOUT THE QUESTION OF WALVIS BAY? (C) WHAT ARE THE CHANCES THAT ON THE ONE HAND SWAPO WILL ACCEPT OUR PROPOSAL, AND ON THE OTHER HAND THAT SOUTH AFRICA WILL ACCEPT IT? (D) HAVE WE DISCUSSED OUR PROPOSAL WITH THE ANGOLAN GOVERNMENT?

4. IN RESPONSE WE EXPLAINED THE PROPOSED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ADMINISTRATOR GENERAL AND THE UN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE, STRESSING THAT ON IMPORTANT ISSUES NOTHING COULD BE DONE WITHOUT THE CONCURRENCE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE. AS WE HAVE DONE ELSEWHERE, WE EXPRESSED OUR BELIEF THAT THERE WAS A GOOD POSSIBILITY THAT BOTH SIDES WOULD DEFER THE ISSUE OF WALVEIS BAY UNTIL AFTER THE QUESTION OF NAMIBIAN INDEPENDENCE HAD BEEN RESOLVED. CONCERNING THE STANDS THAT SWAPO AND THE SAG HAVE TAKEN, WE STATED THAT BOTH PARTIES APPEARED TO BE WELL CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LAGOS 14165 01 OF 02 081151Z

ENTRENCHED IN THEIR REPSECTIVE POSITIONS. WE ALSO NOTED THAT SWAPO DID NOT EVEN BOTHER TO HEAR OUT OUR ENTIRE PRESENTATION WHEN WE MET WITH THEM IN LUSAKA. SOUTH AFRICA HAD MADE SOME MODIFICATIONS ON WITHDRAWAL, BUT NO BASIC CHANGES. AS FOR THE ANGOLANS, THEY ATTACH CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO WHAT SWAPO SAYS, BUT HAVE A REAL INTEREST IN SEEING A SOLUTION TO THE NAMIBIAN PROBLEM. THEY HAD INDICATED A WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE FULLY IF AN AGREEMENT WERE REACHED.

5. OBASANJO SAID THAT THE FMG BELIEVES SWAPO 'REPRESENTS A MAJORITY OF NAMIBIANS, BUT NOT ALL NAMIBIANS.' IT WOULD, THEREFORE, BE CORRECT TO SAY THAT SWAPO'S STAND WOULD 'TO A LARGE EXTENT DETERMINE' THE POSITION TAKEN BY THE FMG. EXEMPHASIZED, HOWEVER, THAT THIS DID NOT MEAN THAT NIGERIA DID NOT HAVE ITS OWN VIEWS AND WOULD NOT EXPRESS THEM WHEN IT TALKS TO SWAPO.

6. HE SAID THAT HE HAD TOLD SWAPO THAT JUST AS THERE ARE BLACK NAMIBIANS WHO FEAR SOUTH AFRICA AND HAVE NO CONFIDENCE THAT THE SAG WOULD LIVE UP TO ANY AGREEMENT, THERE ARE THOSE NAMIBIANS WHO FEAR SWAPO AND WHOSE CONFIDENCE NEEDS TO BE

BUILT UP. IN THIS REGARD THE SCOPE OF THE UN MILITARY
PRESENCE WOULD HAVE TO BE SPELLED OUT. WE COULD NOT JUST
SAY THAT THERE WOULD BE 1500 SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS AND A

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LAGOS 14165 02 OF 02 081108Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13 HA-05 ACDA-12
/088 W

-----097057 081114Z /21/53

O 07145575 DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5276
INFO USMISSION USUN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBSSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LAGOS 14165

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

2,000-MAN UN MILITARY FORCE; IT WOULD HAVE TO BE CLEAR, FOR
EXAMPLE, HOW WELL-ARMED THE SOUTH AFRICANS WOULD BE COMPARED
TO THE UN. IN AN ASIDE, OBASANJO SAID THAT ONE SOUTH AFRICAN
SOLDIER COULD BE WORTH FIVE UN SOLDIERS.

7. HE BRIEFLY TOUCHED ON THE WALVIS BAY ISSUE, SAYING THAT
HE WOULD BE SURPRISED IF THE TWO SIDES WOULD RELEGATE IT TO
THE BACKGROUND. AS FOR ANGOLA, THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT THE
ANGOLAN GOVERNMENT WANTED A SOLUTION, 'BUT NOT AT
ANY COST.' THE ANGOLANS NEED A SOLUTION WHICH WOULD ASSURE
THE SECURITY OF THEIR BORDER, AND THEREFORE THEY WOULD 'FEEL
MORE CONFIDENT' IF NAMIBIA BECAME INDEPENDENT UNDER A SWAPO
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LAGOS 14165 02 OF 02 081108Z

ADMINISTRATION. IN SUCH AN ATMOSPHERE THE ANGOLANS MIGHT
'ASK THE CUBANS TO START PACKING.'

8. OBASANJO EXPRESSED BELIEF THAT SOUTH AFRICA DOES NOT
REALLY WANT TO GIVE UP NAMIBIA. NIGERIA WOULD NOT BE A PARTY
TO ANY 'SHAM' THAT IN EFFECT LEFT THE SOUTH AFRICANS WITH
PREDOMINANT INFLUENCE IN THE TERRITORY. HE SAID THERE WAS
NO DOUBT THAT OUR PROPOSALS -- WITH AN UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN
THE TWO PARTIES, ASSURANCES OF FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS, AN
ABSENCE OF INTIMIDATION, AND SUFFICIENT TIME FOR AN ELECTION
CAMPAIGN -- WOULD PROVIDE THE BASIS FOR A SETTLEMENT.

9. WE OBSERVED THAT SWAPO, THROUGH ITS INSISTENCE ON A
COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS FROM THE TERRITORY,
COULD BE MISSING AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACHIEVE THEIR OBJECTIVE.
OBASANJO REPLIED THAT 'SWAPO'S

JUDGEMENT WAS BASED ON
PATHOLOGICAL DISLIKE AND FEAR OF SOUTH AFRICA.' HE SAID
WE WERE TRYING TO REMOVE THAT FEAR THROUGH THE SAFEGUARDS
CONTAINED IN OUR PROPOSAL. THE FMG UNDERSTOOD SWAPO AND WOULD
'TALK TO THEM ALONG THESE LINES, BUT THEIR SALVATION IS IN
THEIR OWN HANDS.' HE ADDED THAT THE FMG COULD NOT ASK
SWAPO TO DO ANYTHING WHICH SWAPO BELIEVED WOULD LEAD TO
ITS OWN SUICIDE.

10. GARBA ASKED WHEN WE WOULD GO PUBLIC WITH OUR PACKAGE.
HE SAID, 'THE TIME HAS COME TO PUT YOUR CARDS ON THE
TABLE.' OBASANJO DISAGREED. HE SAID THAT THE CONTACT
GROUP NEEDED TO DO MORE 'SPADEWORK,' WHICH WAS PRECISELY
WHY WE HAD COME TO NIGERIA. HE URGED US NOT TO GIVE UP
AND TO CONTINUE TO TALK TO SWAPO AND TO THE SOUTH AFRICANS.
GARBA SAID HE HAD SAID WE MUST PRESENT OUR PROPOSAL SOON
BECAUSE SWAPO HAS ASKED FOR A SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UNGA
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LAGOS 14165 02 OF 02 081108Z

TO DISCUSS THE NAMIBIAN ISSUE. THEREFORE HE THOUGHT IT
WAS TIME TO BRING THE PROBLEM BEFORE THE SECURITY COUNCIL,
OBASANJO SAID, 'NOT YET; YOU DON'T WANT A PUBLIC REJECTION,
BECAUSE THAT WOULD BE THE END OF IT.' MCHENRY AND GARBA
AGREED THAT A SPECIAL SESSION WOULD NOT BE A GOOD IDEA, AND
MCHENRY ADDED WE DID NOT KNOW HOW MUCH WE COULD DELAY.
MOREOVER, SOUTH AFRICA MIGHT SOON DECIDE TO GO AHEAD WITH
AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. THUS WE DO NOT HAVE MUCH TIME AND
NEED TO CONTINUE TO WORK ON BOTH SIDES. IT COULD BE
ARGUED THAT IF SWAPO WOULD BACK AWAY FROM ITS POSITION, WE
COULD USE THIS TO MOVE SOUTH AFRICA CLOSER TO OUR PROPOSAL.

BUT THE OPPOSITE APPLIED AS WELL: A REASONABLE POSITION BY SOUTH AFRICA WOULD MAKE OUR JOB OF MOVING SWAPO EASIER. HOWEVER, AT THE PRESENT TIME THERE IS NO INDICATION THAT EITHER SIDE WILL BUDGE SIGNIFICANTLY FROM ITS RESPECTIVE STAND.

11. OBASANJO SAID THAT THE FMG WOULD TALK TO SWAPO AND FIND OUT 'EXACTLY HOW THEY ARE THINKING.' HE KNEW THAT SWAPO'S MAIN CONCERN WAS WHETHER ELECTIONS WOULD BE FREE AND FAIR. AND HE UNDERSTOOD SOUTH AFRICA'S FEARS REGARDING THE CUBANS. EACH SIDE, HE SAID, NEEDS REASSURANCES ON THESE QUESTIONS.

12. OBASANJO HAD OBVIOUSLY BEEN FULLY BRIEFED BY AMBASSADOR SANU, WHO THE PREVIOUS DAY HAD ASKED FOR AND RECEIVED A BRIEFING BY MCHENRY. OBASANJO SHOWED SHARP AWARENESS OF THE MAIN PROBLEMS TO BE OVERCOME IF THERE IS TO BE AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION TO THE NAMIBIAN ISSUE. ONCE AGAIN HE DEMONSTRATED A PRAGMATIC APPROACH AND WILLINGNESS TO USE NIGERIA'S INFLUENCE TO HELP TRY TO SOLVE A SERIOUS INTERNATIONAL PROBLEM. HOWEVER, NIGERIA SYMPATHIZES WITH SWAPO AND UNDERSTANDS ITS FEARS OF SOUTH AFRICAN DUPLICITY. THEREFORE, WE CANNOT BE SURE TO WHAT EXTENT OBASANJO WILL GO IN AN ATTEMPT TO MOVE SWAPO AWAY FROM ITS REFUSAL TO BUDGE ON THE QUESTION OF THE WITHDRAWAL OF SOUTH AFRICAN

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 LAGOS 14165 02 OF 02 081108Z

TROOPS.
EASUM

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 07-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977LAGOS14165
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780029-0235, D770455-0032
Format: TEL
From: LAGOS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19771284/aaaacsza.tel
Line Count: 257
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7eff150a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 331128
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NAIMBIA: CONTACT GROUP MEETS WITH OBASANJO
TAGS: PDEV, WA, NI, (OBASANJO, OLUSEGUN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7eff150a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009